Iron County Register

BY ELI D. AKE.

IRONTON, - - - MISSOURI.

FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS.

ALF BACHELDER'S MATCHED STEERS.

There was offered one autumn a reward or "premium," of fifteen dollars by the Committee of the Agricultural Society of our county, for the best matched and best trained yoke of yearling steers. The steers were to be exhibited at the county fair held on the third of October, and the owner and trainer must be a boy who was not more than fifteen years old. The object of this premium was to interest the farmers' sons in the "breaking" or training of cattle, and to promote the making up of well-matched yokes of oxen. By well-matched oxen was meant those which not only looked alike as to size, color, and horns, but which were alike in disposition and quickness, or slowness, of movement; in fact, those which, in the yoke, would work together evenly and to the best effect.

The reward had been announced ten months in advance, to give the boys time to mate and train their steers. A notice of it was published in the county paper; and it was said that not less than fifty boys intended to compete for the prize. In our own neighborhood, I recollect, there were three yokes of steers in training all that season, and the rivalry—which was a friendly one—ran quite high.

Willis Murch had a yoke of plain red cattle of the native breed, as we call them. They proved wonderfully tractable. He rarely or never struck one of them. In a way peculiar to himself, he taught them what he wished them to do by giving them pieces of corn, or potatoes, which he carried in his pockets. He had a little cart, a wood sled and a stone drag, which he had made in order to train little "Buck and Bright." They would draw the cart or back it as steadily as old oxen, and "haw" or "gee off" at a word from Willis or a motion of his hand. It was understood, too, that Willis was teaching them a great number of extra feats. His little sister Emma had told other children that Bright would run or walk backwards in a ring like a circus pony. But Willis himself did not speak of this; and he would not perform with Buck and Bright before any of the boys.

We expected Willis would have the best trained yoke. Still we did not greatly fear him as a rival, for his steers were not large, nor were they handsome. My cousin George and I, who lived together on the same home-farm, owned a yoke of steers in company. They were of the breed known as the Devon, but were lightly graded in the Hereford breed, and were of a dark, cherry-red color. Each of them had a "star in the face," that is, a patch of white as large as the palm of one's hand. In length of body, build, and in the shape and size of their horns, they were so very much alike that it was difficult even for George or for me to tell them apart. Besides this, they were large, for they measured, in September that fall, five feet and an inch each in girth. Star and Golden were their names. Week by week we trained them, till there was no manner of farm-work which they would not do as well and with as much apparent steadiness as old oxen. George also taught them to walk together, without being yoked. He could also call them to him to be yoked by a motion of his hand and by simply saying, "Come, Golden," at a distance of twenty or thirty yards. We really thought this accomplishment more useful than all the "circus tricks" of Willis's steers; at least, that was the way we comforted ourselves whenever we heard of the remarkable feats which they were said to perform.

But the rival we feared most was a boy named Alfred Bachelder, who lived at "the Corners," half or three-fourths of a mile from us. Alf's steers were of the Durham breed, but not quite pure-blood, I think. In color they were cream-white, with dark red markings on the shoulders, sides and flanks. So far as red and white went, the two were marked nearly alike, and their horns in size and shape matched very well. But the "off" one was also marked in a peculiar manner. "Guard"—Alf had given his steers the rather unusual names of *Job and Guard*—had, in addition to his other markings, a patch of black hair as large as a dinner-plate on his right side, just back of his shoulder, and also a black star on his face. This made him differ in looks somewhat from Job, whose face was a pure cream white. These steers were very large—larger than ours by two or three inches in girth on a steer; and they were probably as well-trained as ours, for Alf had spared no pains in this particular; and he was a remarkably apt, bright boy. But our steers were the best-matched. That black star and the black patch made Guard look odd and not well-mated with Job. George and I counted on this defect in the marking of the cattle.

In August of that summer there came to our town a traveling photographic artist, with his "studio" mounted on wheels and drawn by a horse. He planted his studio by the roadside at "the Corners," and remained there, taking pictures for four or five weeks. All of us had our "tintypes" taken. The photographer boarded at Mr. Bachelder's, and Alf was with him in his studio a good deal, and told us boys that he was learning the art himself. What this had to do with an exhibition of matched steers, I leave the reader to surmise further on.

One night, just at sunset, about a fortnight before the day set for the fair, George and I called at Alf's to look at Job and Guard, as we had often done before. He was not at all like Willis Murch, for he delighted to show us what his steers could do. That night he yoked them and put them through all his steer tactics.

"Its no use, Alf," George said to him. "Those are good steers, but there's that black star of Guard's. You can't quite call 'em maiched; not handsomely."

"Wal, I know," said Alf, "that's against 'em. But I may be able to better 'em yet. I've been inquiring, and I've heard of a steer in Princeton, which they say is marked almost just like Guard. I'm going there to-morrow to see if it's true, and if it is I'm bound to have that steer."

"Is he as big as yours?" George asked.

"Of course I can't tell till I see him," said Alf; "but I hear he is a good steer."

We were surprised, but did not believe that Alf would find the steer to match Guard; in fact, we did not believe there was another steer in the State like him.

The next day and the next, Alf was gone with his steers; where, we did not know. Three or four days after this, he sent a message asking us to come and see his new steer. We were, of course, so anxious and interested that we hurried to the Corners that very night. Alf had the cattle tied in the barn, but turned them out at once. First, Guard came into the yard, then the new steer followed. Our eyes, of course, were bent on the latter, and at first sight our hearts sank and we lost all hope of winning the premium. The new steer, which Alf said he had got in Princeton, had a black star and a black patch on its side exactly like those of Guard's. We could scarcely believe our eyes. Alf was in high spirits, and told us at great length about his swapping, etc. As the yoke stood now, the steers were completely matched; and it was an odd and very remarkable match, too.

"This new steer's name is Buck." Alf said, "but I'm going to call him Job, like the other, I've got so used to that name."

"But will you have time to train him?" we asked. "It's only eight days till 'fair' day."

"I don't know, hardly," replied Alf. "But he is pretty well 'broke,' now, and I shall do my best with him."

We went home discouraged. "The premium is lost for us," George said. "But it certainly seems something strange that both the star on the head and the black patch on the new steer's side are exactly like those on Guard's."

Fair-day came, and at three o'clock in the afternoon the trained steers were exhibited and viewed by the committee. Besides ours, there were at least 25 other yokes. Consequently, there was but a brief time for each yoke to show working qualities. Willis Murch got little chance to exhibit his "circus steers," as they were nicknamed.

The committee went twice to look at our Star and Golden, but at length agreed fully to give the prize to Alf Bachelder. In fact, every body wondered at the curiously exact manner in which Job and Guard were matched, in three colors, white, red and black. Alf had plenty of offers for them that day from stock fanciers; and before night he sold them to a man from another county for the large sum of ninety-five dollars.

While we were attending the winter school in the following December, there was a rumor that the man to whom Alf had sold his steers had been to see him, and that he claimed there "was something wrong" about them. Alf laughed when the rumor was spoken of to him, and said the man claimed that one of them was not sound, but he couldn't prove any thing.

Alf was a young man of more than ordinary ability and business tact. From the time he was 17 years old till after he became of age he dealt in horses, often owning three or four, and leaving the humbler details of farming and steer-breaking to us duller boys. His method was to buy promising colts of the farmers in the back towns, and after training them for the race-course, or matching them for spans, to sell them at a handsome profit to dealers or to gentlemen in distant cities.

He had now left his home with his father and mother, and lived in the village, although he was often away to both Portland and Boston. The villagers said that he was making money fast; and it was also said that he spent it as fast as he made it. There were many reports, too, of his tricks in dealing with customers, and of their suing him and threatening him with arrest. He seemed to prosper pecuniarily, however, and drew round him a clique of young men who held that he was a model of shrewdness and smartness.

One "fair" night, just six years after the fall we exhibited our trained steers, I for the first time learned the facts connected with Alf's matched steers. He told it himself. There was an assembly in the Agricultural Hall that evening, and Alf was in high spirits; for that afternoon he had won a hundred-dollar bill on a horse trot. Twenty or thirty of us young men were standing in the hall, chatting and laughing, when some one happened to speak of the matched steer contest. Alf laughed. "It's been so long now," said he, "I don't s'pose any of you will care, and I'm going to *blow* that."

"What is it? Tell us," was the response of the young men about him.

"Well, ye see, those steers were nicely matched, but for the black spots. 'Twas no use. There warn't another steer in the country marked just like Guard, and all that Job needed to be just like Guard was those two black spots. So I concluded he'd better have 'em; in fact that he really ought to have 'em. That fellow Merrill, the tintype-taker, was there then. I had been round his shop a good deal, and found out that nitrate of silver would turn white hair a beautiful black. So I just took Job into the woods and doctored him. You know the rest. He was the new steer from up in Princeton after that."

Some of the fellows laughed. It was a very sharp trick, especially in a boy fifteen; but the more thoughtful of us called it by its right name—a knavish trick, thoroughly mean and dishonorable.

This was in October. In May following, Alf was arrested for horse-stealing. He had been "up country," as he said, buying horses, and came home with four. Among them was a very fine coal-black young horse, which at once attracted the interest of every person who saw it. The animal was tall, slim, and jet-black. There was not a white hair on him, but he had a pink nose. Alf refused all offers, and said he had bought "Romeo," as he called him, expressly for a gentleman in New York.

About a week later, three men, one of them a Sheriff, went to the village hotel where Alf was boarding, and inquired for him. On his presenting himself, one of them accused him of stealing his horse. The Sheriff had a warrant for his arrest.

Alf took it very coolly. "There is some mistake," he said. "What was your horse? Describe it. What color was it?"

"Black as a coal," said the man, "but with a white face and two white stockings."

Alf smiled, and very coolly said, "Yes, please come out to the stable and loo at my horses.

"This is the only black horse I have," Alf said, carelessly backing Romeo out of his stall. "Do you call this horse yours?"

The man looked at the animal and seemed confounded.

"Whoa, Romeo!" said Alf.

"Do you say his name is Romeo?" exclaimed the man.

"That's his name," said Alf, pleasantly.

The man stared and seemed confused. "That horse is shaped like my horse, but he's not marked like him. But I can tell whether he's my horse or not!" he exclaimed, with some excitement. Stepping back out of the stable into the street, he called out, "Plato, Plato! Come here, Plato! Plato, Plato!"

The horse pricked his ears in an instant, and tried to pull away from Alf to go to his old master. Alf resisted, but the Sheriff obliged him to give the horse his way; and the animal at once put his nose beside the man's cheek with every indication of pleasure at finding him.

The bystanders said that Alf turned pale. The Sheriff thought the evidence strong enough to justify him in taking the "sharp" young man into custody on the spot.

In the examination and trial which followed, the hair on the horse's nose and legs was chemically tested, and found to have traces of nitrate of silver; and in the course of a few weeks it grew out white again.

The "smartness" was very much less of a joke that time. Bachelder was found guilty, and sentenced to three years in prison. But he appealed on some law point, and by means of skillful lawyers, to whom he must have paid enormous lawyers' fees, at the close of his second trial he was acquitted somehow—though every body knew he was guilty.

He left the State and went West to one of the new mining towns, where most of the "sharp" young men go. I have heard of him since. Now his "sharpness" receives its right name, for he is known as a hard character and a "blackleg."

There is not a reader of the *Companion* too dull to see the moral of this narrative. The road from "sharp" tricks to crimes is wonderfully easy and direct, and it is all down hill. The tendency in human nature is such that when a boy allows himself to indulge in them, he is almost as sure to go on to crime as death is sure to follow the bite of a poisonous serpent.—*C. A. Stephenson, in Youth's Companion.*

AT Delaware, O., the other day, a three-year-old daughter of George Bell was fatally shot by her consin, Daisy Price, aged eight years. Daisy had been playing with a toy pistol, but found her father's revolver and thought that much nicer. While showing it to her little cousin it was discharged, with fatal effect.

A Singular Case of Hydrophobia.

Mr. Charles Alsberry, a French tailor, doing business at 195 Larrabee Street, died yesterday morning, in terrible agony. In many respects his malady resembled hydrophobia. It seems that about six weeks ago, on a Friday morning, a young boy came into Mr. Alsberry's shop with a pointer pup and requested that Mr. Alsberry would keep the dog for an hour or two. The tailor consented, and in order to make sure that he would not get lost or stolen, undertook to put him in the cellar. To this procedure the dog naturally objected, and in the struggle which ensued, bit Mr. Alsberry in the right wrist. The wound soon healed, but on the third day, in order to be on the safe side, it was cauterized. The lacerated wrist soon became well and the tailor dismissed the matter from his mind and resumed his daily avocation.

On last Wednesday, however, symptoms resembling those of hydrophobia began to make their appearance, a swelling of the wound and of the right limbs was observed, and Mr. Alsberry began to bark like a dog, and complain that his throat was so swollen that he could not swallow food, and finally showed an abhorrence of water. The bite of the dog was then brought to mind and he began to fear that he was about to be attacked by the dread disease. Dr. Henrotin was summoned and pronounced the case one of hydrophobia, and treated it accordingly, calling in other physicians. The patient seemed perfectly conscious of his condition and could feel the approach of his paroxysms, when he would direct his attendants to bind him. This was done, not because he exhibited any violent desire to bite those around him, but because when in his spasms he would be possessed with the idea that he must work, and it was thought unwise for him to go to the shop. On Thursday he seemed a little better. The loathing of water ceased, and he began to crave the fluid, and was not able to drink enough to satisfy his desire. But the spasms still recurred at regular intervals of about twelve hours each, though not so violent as before. In the intervals between them he was cheerful, even jovial, though this was probably occasioned by an unnatural excitement of mind produced by the disease. In this state he continued through Friday, and it was hoped that he would recover.

On yesterday morning, however, his spasms became unusually violent, and his family were so frightened that help was summoned from the Chicago Avenue Police Station. At about ten o'clock he became suddenly unconscious, and so continued for about an hour and a half, when he died.

Dr. Henrotin, who had been in constant attendance npon the patient since Wednesday, is at a loss whether or not to consider this a genuine case of rabies. The absence of dread of water after the first day, and the quiet nature of the paroxysms make it phenomenal if it was hydrophobia. The doctor thinks that perhaps the swelling of the limbs and throat may be attributed to rheumatism, aggravated by some little poison not of a hydrophobic nature, communicated from the bite of the dog. The neighbors were continually remarking about the danger of the disease, and this may have worked so upon the man's mind that when his throat swelled he became convinced that he was a victim, and so fancied that he could not drink water. This may also have occasioned his barking. It is the doctor's conjecture that if he was not afflicted with the rabies, he died of nothing but fright.

Mr. Alsberry was fifty-one years of age.—*Chicago Times.*

The Game of Fifteen.

It is the duty of the press to take cognizance of every influence that has any important bearing upon the public health or public prosperity. It is, therefore, morally impossible to longer avoid recognition of the place that the gem puzzle occupies in our general social economy or the mastery it has obtained over all minds. We have known for a long time that it was violent in its attacks, but we had hoped it would be simply sporadic. The evidences are, however, at last unmistakable that it has reached the proportions of an epidemic. Neither the wrinkled front of age nor the cherubic brow of childhood is proof against the contagion. It comes in to divide the fascination of stock speculations; it obtrudes itself before the ledger of the merchant and, amid the intricacies of specific and ad valorem figures, he wonders if there is any way in which the 15 can be worked into its own proper corner with the 14 in the path and 13 and 12 guarding the side streets, except by jumping or cutting a hole in the side of the box. The blacksmith at his anvil, and the carpenter, the shoemaker and the judge at their respective benches betray in their haggard countenances the ravages of this nervous irritant. A Cornell student was recently fined $15 for the violation of an almost obsolete statute, when, but for the institution of fifteen as the imperial number, he would have been let off with a fine of not more than $7.

In this connection we publish elsewhere a very intelligent criticism by a gentleman who is convalescent. He may be considered an expert. He has undergone the pain and the anguish that only a violent attack of permutation complicated with geometry can inflict. He has known what it is to have sleepless nights and troubled dreams. He has perspired through many a nightmare in which fourteen little blocks with legs were ceaselesly waltzing through the gray matter of his brain, while a stubborn villain with 15 on his breast was forever getting in the way, breaking up sets and making order impossible. Having passed through this and survived, he is entitled to speak with some authority, and we think that he has likewise spoken with much common sense. He says that in certain combinations it is not impossible to obtain a complete and honest solution of the puzzle, and he discourages the afflicted community from striving longer after the impossible. We hear vague rumors now and then that some one has surmounted all difficulties and attained the unattainable; but no demonstration accompanies these brilliant results, and we are left in as blank a doubt as ever, Genius alone can do it, but genius can not tell how it is done. We have sometimes been inclined to think that genius cheated a little. We desire those who can accomplish this feat to show upon the blackboard, to the satisfaction of a committee of fifteen, their methods, or forever hold their peace.—*Boston Post.*

He Won The Bet.

Soon after two o'clock yesterday the sash in a fourth-story window of a business house on Woodward Avenue was raised and a man's head and shoulders appeared in sight. Next he thrust out an arm, and pedestrians saw a small rope in his hand. Twenty men halted in less than a minute. A plank was lying at the curb, and the general line of reasoning was that the plank was to be drawn up through the window.

"You'll break the glass if you try it!" shouted one of the fast-growing group.

"That cord isn't stout enough!" yelled a third.

"Why don't they carry it up by way of the stairs?" demanded a man, as he flourished his gold-headed cane around and seemed much put out.

The cord came part way down and stopped. Some ten different persons volunteered the information of "more yet," and presently it was lowered so that one of the crowd could grasp it. He pulled down and the man above pulled up, and four or five men seized the plank and brought it to the rope.

"Lower away!" yelled the man at the rope.

"Pull down on it!" cried a dozen voices.

The man above let out more rope and waved his hand.

"He wants it over that hitching-post!" screamed a boy, and it was carried there.

"No; he wants it fast to the lamp-post!" shouted a man, and it was carried there.

"Let—that—rope—alone!" came from the man above.

Six men had hold of the plank, ready to boost on it, and three more had hold of the rope.

"Do you want the plank?" asked one.

"No!"

"Do you want the hitching-post?"

"No!"

"Well, what do you want?"

"I want you to let that rope alone! I had a bet of the cigars that it was long enough to touch the walk, and I've won 'em What's the row down there—somebody dropped dead?"

The plank was hurled away, cuss-words indulged in as toes were trodden on, and in fifteen seconds the crowd had melted away to a squint-eyed boy and an organ-grinder.—*Detroit Free Press.*

Dispensing Gifts at Lunches.

The extremely rich are just now trying to outdo each other in the magnificence of lunches and dinners. As Nature revolts against more than a certain number of courses and a fixed quantity of food, the cupidity of the guests is catered to as well as their appetites. Accordingly, it is now regarded as the proper thing for Mrs. Nabob when she gives a dinner or lunch to provide from one to five presents for each one of her guests. While the most cultivated society will probably pronounce ere long its sentence of disapproval upon this return to the shoddy display of the Jim Fisk era, at present the custom is in vogue. Mrs. Wm. H. Vanderbilt a few days ago gave a lunch to a number of lady friends, each one of whom carried away four elegant presents which were placed about her plate The lunch cost several hundred dollars and was of course in the highest art of the French master of the kitchen, and in itself was sufficiently complimentary to the guests. When the presents were heaped upon the favored friends of the rich man's wife, they made such a monument of magnificence that for a long period, in ambitious New York society, Mrs. Vanderbilt's entertainment will stand unsurpassed. Those who partake of these grand affairs say that they never carry away light hearts because of the feeling that in some way they are expected to do as much for society and they are keenly conscious that they can not afford it. They would prefer a modest, chatty affair, with no more of a souvenir than a tea rose and a sprig of geranium. Then they could meet the very rich with ease and entertain them with comfort, but the immense parade of wealth saddens their social delights.—*New York Letter.*

WIT AND WISDOM

WHAT hath ears but hears not? A crib of corn.

IT is easy to breakfast in bed if you will be satisfied with a few rolls and a turn-over.

LAUGH and grow fat—grow fat and be laughed at. It is a poor rule that will not work in all directions.

BISMARCK is entitled to wear 46 decorations. When he is dressed for ceremony he looks like a speckled hen. —*N. O. Pickyune.*

RUSSIA must be a great country for hard colds. Almost every one's name ends with a "koff".—*Detroit Free Press.*

A SCHOOL-TEACHER in Iowa had the debt of the world all nicely figured up to a cent, when a Chicago man went and got trusted for a cod-fish, and forgot whether it came to seventeen or twenty-seven cents. It was awful mean on the school-teacher.—*Hawkeye.*

EVEN in this age of enlightenment there are sights which make one shudder, and to a fond father one of them consists in inadvertently looking into the parlor some evening just in time to see the young lady next door hastily withdraw her arm from his eldest son's waist, and hear the blushing boy say: "Oh, you horrid thing! You really mustn't; you've ruffled my coat all up and broken my cigarette-case with your dreadful squeezing." Leap-year is here. —*Chicago Tribune.*

ON Sunday the teacher of a Sunday-school class in one of the East Bridgeport churches gave the little ones a description of the flood, and, when she finished, inquired if any one could tell who went into the ark with the animals? A perfect chorus of hands flew up. Turning to a little fellow, the teacher said: "Tell me who went into the ark with the animals?" "P. T. Barnum," promptly replied the youngster. The lesson closed.—*Bridgeport Standard.*

Bodily Heat.

It is a remarkable fact that the temperature of the body in health is always the same in summer and winter, in the arctic zone and in the torrid. This seems the more remarkable in view of the fact that the body is just as subject to the great law of radiation as every other heated object. It throws off more slowly in a warm temperature and more rapidly in a cold, but it always radiates heat. The normal temperature of the body is slightly above 98 F. A few degrees above indicates consuming fever; a few below, a depressed condition that tends to collapse and death. Expose the living, healthy body and a red-hot mass of equal size to the same freezing temperature in a long ride, and at the end of it the latter will be ice-cold, while the temperature of the body will stand precisely as at the start. The explanation is, that the body is self-heating. The heat is constantly radiated, but it is as constantly generated, and what is still more striking, the healthy body so regulates its temperature that in cold climates it ever keeps the heat up to the standard, and in warm climates it keeps down the excess. In the first case, the consumption of the internal fuel—or food—is more rapid, and the appetite is keener to supply the demand, and the digestion is more vigorous. In the second case, in warm climates, the consumption of fuel—or food—is much slower, and the appetite craves food that has less of the heat-making properties. Further, if the heat tends to increase beyond the standard, the body at once covers itself with water (sweat), the evaporation of which carries off the dangerous excess. Heat in a furnace is caused by the union of the oxygen of the air with the carbon of the coal. So heat is generated in the lungs by the union of the oxygen of the inbreathed air with the carbon of the impure blood. But this is not the only source. Similar heat-generating changes take place at every point in the whole body, as new particles displace the old. A person who eats good food, has a good digestion, and good health generally, if properly clothed, will rarely suffer from even the severe cold of our Northern winters. —*Youth's Companion.*

He Solved It.

We knew that some bad result would proceed from the game of "fifteen." The following incident, which happened in a neighboring city a few days since, illustrates the dangers to which men who indulge in the game are liable: "About 12 o'clock at night a man was sitting in his house studying on the game of 'fifteen.' Several times he failed, but at last he was about to be successful. He reached forward to make the final move in high exultation, when his housekeeper, who had watched the game with disgust at being unable to understand it, upset the board, and told the excited man it was time for him to go to bed. Both parties recovered their equanimity a few minutes later, when a Police Sergeant asked the woman what charge she wished to make. Although her nose was yet bleeding, she informed the Sergeant she was satisfied, and the two were dismissed."—*Albany Argus.*

COCOANUT CAKE.—One and one-half cups of butter, whites of three eggs, one cup of milk, three cups of flour, one teaspoonful of cream of tartar, one-half teaspoonful of soda, and one grated cocoanut, leaving one-half cup to sprinkle on top either before or after baking. Icing.